

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 129

By Marsh

A RESOLUTION to honor and congratulate Phillip Fulmer upon his induction into the College Football Hall of Fame.

WHEREAS, former University of Tennessee head football coach Phillip Fulmer earned the esteemed honor of induction into the College Football Hall of Fame in December of 2012 on the very first ballot since he became eligible for such honor. He entered the Hall with other distinguished coaches Jimmy Johnson, who coached at the University of Miami, and R.C. Slocum, who coached at Texas A&M University; and

WHEREAS, Phillip Fulmer is a lifelong Volunteer. This Winchester native attended Franklin County High School before enrolling as a student at the University of Tennessee in 1968; and

WHEREAS, a talented football player, Coach Fulmer exhibited great persistence and an unwavering work ethic both on and off the field, qualities which earned him placement on the All-Southeastern Conference team as an offensive guard and enabled him to help his team win the Southeastern Conference (SEC) Championship in 1969 and the Sugar Bowl in 1970; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Fulmer embarked upon what would become an illustrious coaching career at the young age of twenty-three in 1973, when he was named the coach of the Volunteers' freshman football team; and

WHEREAS, Coach Fulmer further refined his coaching abilities and style as an assistant coach at Wichita State University and Vanderbilt University before returning to his alma mater in 1980; and

WHEREAS, after returning to The Hill, Phillip Fulmer served as an assistant coach for thirteen years, first as an offensive line coach and later as an offensive coordinator. During his

tenure as offensive coordinator, the Volunteers set school records for total offensive yards in three consecutive seasons; and

WHEREAS, Coach Fulmer served as the interim head coach during a critical stretch of the 1992 season before being named the head coach before the 1993 season. As the head coach of the illustrious Vols, Phillip Fulmer led his teams to an incredible level of success; and

WHEREAS, under Coach Fulmer, the Tennessee Volunteers were ranked as one of the top ten teams in the nation for an incredible fifty-four consecutive weeks, and nine of his teams won ten or more games in a season; and

WHEREAS, he also led the Big Orange to SEC championship games in 1997, 1998, 2001, 2004, and 2007, bringing the SEC championship title home to Rocky Top in 1997 and 1998. Since then, no other SEC team has managed to capture back-to-back conference titles; and

WHEREAS, Coach Fulmer led the Volunteers to a record of ninety-eight wins to only thirty-four losses in SEC play during his tenure as head coach, and an overall record of 152 wins to fifty-two losses. Those 152 wins make him the second-winningest coach in the university's history, second only to General Robert Neyland; and

WHEREAS, despite the fact that he spent his career as a head coach in the toughest, most dominating conference in college football, Phillip Fulmer became the fifth fastest coach in NCAA history to reach 100 career victories and compiled a career winning percentage of 0.744; and

WHEREAS, eighteen of his players were chosen for First Team All-American honors during his tenure, including Volunteer greats Peyton Manning, Al Wilson, Leonard Little, and Eric Berry. Ninety-three of his players were drafted into the National Football League, including eighteen who were chosen in the coveted first round; and

WHEREAS, no stranger to awards and accolades, Coach Fulmer was recognized as the National Coach of the Year in 1998 and gained induction into the Tennessee Sports Hall of Fame in 2001; and

WHEREAS, his years as the head coach of the Volunteers inspired and invigorated an entire generation of fans, and more than ten million of those fans passed through Neyland Stadium's turnstiles to cheer on Phillip Fulmer's teams; and

WHEREAS, Philip Fulmer is not only a coaching treasure, but he is also deeply devoted to making positive differences in the lives of young people. Coach Fulmer serves as the national spokesperson for the Jason Foundation, a position he has held since 1998 and has used to build public awareness of the problem of youth suicide, a cause he also champions on behalf of the American Football Coaches Association; and

WHEREAS, in addition to his work with the Jason Foundation and the American Football Coaches Association, Mr. Fulmer has also rendered sterling service as a member of the boards of directors of the Boys and Girls Club, Team Focus, and Child and Family Services; and

WHEREAS, Phillip and his loving wife, Vicki, have expressed their appreciation to the University of Tennessee in countless ways, including by the donation of \$1 million to the university, a donation which benefits both academic and athletic programs; and

WHEREAS, Phillip and Vicky Fulmer, along with their children, Courtney, Brittany, Allison, and Phillip Jr., constantly fostered a familial atmosphere in the Tennessee football program, incorporating each and every player and coach into the Fulmer family; and

WHEREAS, Coach Fulmer's most cherished responsibility as a steward to a nationally recognized, celebrated football program was the education and guidance of young student-athletes; and

WHEREAS, Phillip Fulmer has not only brought honor and acclaim upon himself through his induction into the College Football Hall of Fame, but has also exhibited an inherent and unwavering loyalty and dedication to this State and to the University of Tennessee, bringing honor to the great State of Tennessee and its citizens; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED EIGHTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we hereby commend and congratulate Phillip Fulmer, a true Volunteer, for his outstanding service to the State of Tennessee and his rightful induction into the hallowed College Football Hall of Fame.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that on behalf of Big Orange fans and fans of college football in general, we express our deep and heartfelt appreciation to Coach Fulmer for his contributions to this State and to the sport of college football, both on and off the field, and extend our best wishes for his success in every future endeavor.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.